

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

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“Women in Tech” Hiring Initiative

The County of Los Angeles has approximately 112,760 budgeted positions and about 95,000 full-time employees, with an average annual salary of \$82,227. Men, who make up 40.3% of County employees, earn an average salary of \$89,036 in regular salary earnings (not overtime or employee benefits). Women, who make up 59.7% of County employees, earn an average salary of \$77,634. Put another way, the average male full-time County employee earns 14.7% more (+\$11,402) than the average female full-time County employee. If we included part-time employees in the figures above, the disparity between salary by gender would increase, as part-time employees are more likely to be female and in lower-salary positions.

At the County, an employee’s salary is largely a function of longevity and job classification, which may explain at least part of the gender imbalance in County salaries, as classifications filled primarily by women have lower salaries and longevity only increases the differences. The County does not have comprehensive information on its transgender employees, so their average salary is unknown.

The average County salary for women is depressed because of the

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preponderance of women in certain occupational groups, such as clerical, service and social services positions, which tend to have lower salary levels than in occupational groups where men are predominant, such as engineering, public safety and skilled crafts like carpentry, plumbing and plastering. Information Technology (IT) positions, in particular, are highly compensated, with an average salary of \$108,269, and highly gender imbalanced, with women making up only 28.78% of the County's 3,019 IT staffers, compared to their 59.7% share of overall County employees. Among the County's 3,019 IT staffers, it appears that the relative share of women decreases as the responsibility level and salary levels increase. In other words, the higher you go in IT, the fewer women you see.

Case in point: among the County's 15 Departmental Chief Information Officers, only three are women. Among one group of strategically important IT positions (the Network Systems Administrator classifications), women comprise only 7.0% of the 270 positions in the County. We can, and must, do better.

According to research conducted by the County's Department of Human Resources (DHR), approximately 80% of County hiring is made through Internal Promotions (70%) and Internal Transfers (10%), while the remaining 20% are New (External) Hires. The private sector is just the opposite, with 70% of hires coming from the outside and 30% coming from the inside. The County's heavy reliance on internal recruitment is beneficial from a workforce development perspective, because it gives County employees, at all levels, an opportunity to "promote up." It can also give the County an opportunity to begin addressing the shortage of women in Information Technology positions, by identifying promising women from outside and inside the County for entry-level IT positions, providing them with training, skills development and

mentoring in order to prepare them to successfully compete in civil service exams.

One entry-level IT classification—Information Technology Aide— has 45 incumbents, 48.9% of whom are women. The Senior Information Technology Aide has 56 incumbents, 37.5% of whom are women. The Information Technology Aide classification requires two years of highly specialized clerical experience related to, or including, the “use or installation of desktop software” and has a starting salary of \$43,000 per year. The position does not have other external barriers to entry, such as a requirement of a college degree or special certification.

In June of 2017, the Board of Supervisors instructed the Director of Personnel, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Director of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) to transform our existing Youth Jobs (Youth@Work) program into the Countywide Youth Bridges Program (Youth Bridges), incorporating a direct public sector employment placement strategy. DHR and WDACS launched the Youth Bridges workforce pipeline program shortly thereafter, offering youth a three-step career pathway model. This model may be a useful access point for an IT-focused initiative.



DHR and WDACS are pairing work experience and personal enrichment training for at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 24 with a more comprehensive and focused set of career opportunities geared toward permanent employment, enhanced training and

supportive services. Since inception:

- 1,827 youth have enrolled and all have been placed in County departments.
- 911 youth have successfully completed the 120-hour paid internship (Step One).
- 392 are still in their 120-hour paid internships.

Of the 911 youth who completed Step One, 110 took the Youth Worker civil service exam and 72 passed. As of June 30, 2019, ten youth have been successfully hired into full-time, twelve-month County positions.

As part of Youth Bridges, WDACS and DHR have established recruitment partnerships with key local agencies, like TransCanWork, the L.A. LGBTQ Center, the Opportunity Youth Collaborative, plus K-12, adult schools and community colleges to ensure that priority populations have access to these opportunities.

In 2016, the Board of Supervisors voted to create the LA County Initiative on Women and Girls (WGI), to examine the systemic issues that lead to inequitable gender outcomes and to recommend changes to improve the quality of life for women and girls in the County, including in County employment. In 2019, a diverse group of female County IT employees convened to create a Women in Technology group (an informal employee group), with the aim of advancing and supporting women in Information Technology at the County of Los Angeles. The Women in Technology employee group's goals are to support leadership development, technology education, networking and mentoring opportunities for women at all levels of their technology careers. They believe that greater inclusion in computing and technology careers not only lifts individuals, but also the entire County community.

The timing is right to create a new initiative to recruit and train exceptionally motivated women to become County IT professionals. The County has a continuing,

and increasing, need to recruit and retain IT talent, with larger numbers of County employees retiring each year and increasing reliance on IT systems to conduct the County's business. Therefore, the County should design and launch a "Women in Tech" Hiring Initiative, to recruit, train, mentor and prepare women to successfully compete in civil service examinations for entry-level County information technology positions. Per the terms of California Proposition 209, candidates of all genders will be welcomed into the program, though the recruitment focus will be on women, because of the high degree of gender imbalance in County IT classifications.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Instruct the Director of Personnel, in collaboration with the Executive Officer of the Board of Supervisors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Director of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), the Executive Director of the County Women and Girls' Initiative, the Chief Information Officer, the Director of Internal Services and the leadership of the Women in Technology employee group, to submit a proposal in 120 days, with an immediate or phased implementation timeline, plus budget and position authority needs, to establish a "Women in Tech" Hiring Initiative. The Women in Tech (WIT) Hiring Initiative should feature or include:
 - a. A focus on recruiting, training, mentoring and preparing women (and interested men, transgender and nonbinary individuals) to successfully compete in civil service examinations for entry-level County information technology positions. Candidates may initially be placed into the Youth Worker classification, which has minimal barriers to entry, where they can gain skills and experience that meet the examination requirements for County

IT classifications, such as Information Technology Aide.

- b. A focus on training and providing at-risk youth with technology, computing and information technology skills that can serve as a career path and provide the County with an ongoing talent pipeline.
- c. Recruitment campaigns designed to attract and recruit underrepresented demographics (e.g., LGBTQ women, nonbinary individuals, immigrants, etc.) to the initiative.
- d. A strategy to address key goals including:
 - Building career enabling IT skills for participants, including current County employees in the Information Technology and Senior Information Technology Aide (or other) classifications who seek advancement in their careers.
 - Providing a strategic pipeline of talent for Countywide IT positions and increasing gender representation in those positions.
 - Providing for retention of IT Youth Worker participants through monitoring, mentoring, and other appropriate programs, including assistance with soft-skills development, related to integration into the County workforce.
 - A cohort model, whereby all participants in a cohort are enrolled at the same time, attend the same “boot camp” to gain soft skills and hard skills and convene at regular intervals for continuing education and/or enrichment activities.
 - Support of and additional professional development for leadership of the Women in Technology employee group, to enable them to provide mentorship to program participants. The mentorship program should be

designed to assist participants in acclimating to and becoming conversant in key areas within information technology fields, such as infrastructure management, application design and development, information security, etc. Support may include allowing employee group members to participate in the program as part of their regular job duties or incorporating related metrics into their Management Appraisal Performance Plan goals.

- A sufficient number of ordinance-only positions in which to place participants for the duration of the initiative and for post-initiative placement into County departments.
2. Instruct the Director of Internal Services, in conjunction with the CEO, the Chief Information Officer and County Counsel, to submit an assessment on private sector partnership opportunities for inclusion in the WIT Hiring Initiative proposal. The partnership opportunities will be with private businesses that currently provide information technology services to County entities and should reflect:
 - a. Asking if current IT vendors are willing to volunteer their staff to provide technical education, ongoing training, mentorship and/or on-the-job experience to participants in the initiative.
 - b. The potential to include standard contract provisions for information technology contracts over a dollar-value threshold that requires vendors to provide education and training for initiative participants on industry-grade technology concepts, tools and solutions.
 3. Instruct the Director of Personnel to work with appropriate Department Directors, appropriate Labor Representatives and the CEO's Classification Division to amend the Youth Worker classification (Item No. 8285) to allow for an IT

specialty that will provide a low barrier to entry and enable incumbents to acquire the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to meet the minimum qualifications for entry-level County IT classifications.

S:KK/"Women in Tech" Hiring Initiative